5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mountain Orokaiva

292 531 The head-dresses (*di*) and ornaments (*hambo*) are themselves artistic creations. A full feather head-dress is composed of some two dozen strands of feathers, each strand consisting of a dozen or more feathers. The strands are carefully made, sometimes from artistically shaped and trimmed feathers, while short down of striking colours may be tied to the tips of feathers. The order and arrangement of the strands making up the headdress is to some extent determined by custom but mainly by the artistic sense of the decorator, who 301 531 may spend days working out the precise effect he wants. Similarly the *hambo* are often composed of a variety of objects – dog's teeth, shells, pieces of crocodile skin, a special kind of banana seed, for instance. The decorator aims at a pleasing design but is always aware of the effect of the total object as body [778] decoration in relation to the skin, face and body of the wearer. While the objects themselves undoubtedly have magical significance, and much might be discovered about the symbolism of *di* and *hambo*, my informants were far more interested in talking to me about the aesthetics rather than the occult significance of these decorations. I surmise that the magical efficacy is actually thought to inhere in the beauty of these objects rather than in the specific qualities of component parts. Women are as lavishly decorated as men. Though some *hambo* are reserved for males only and others are characteristically female, decorations are usually interchangeable between the sexes.

796 ●533 535 *Music, Dance and Song.* Today the great occasions when body decoration is performed mainly coincide with Christian festivals – Christmas, Easter, and name days of saints. But these dates tend to be close to the festive periods in the traditional Orokaiva calendar. For instance, Easter occurs around the beginning of the traditional feasting season, while Christmas is close to the rituals performed to stimulate the filling out of the taro tubers planted in the period before the rains. It is on these great occasions that the major dance cycles are performed, accompanied by entirely traditional songs and drum music. But 'practising' for these performances proceeds for months before and after Christmas, and again between Easter and the end of June. In Lent, all this is strictly prohibited, for reasons that again go back to taro magic. At any time of the year but this, one hears almost every able-bodied male in the village, from the age of two upwards, practising the dance, with or without the accompaniment of songs, while every village has its original poets who compose new songs every year. Dance 'practices' occur rather frequently, about four times a week in the two months or so before a performance. They tend to start in the early evening and continue until after midnight. Some of the dancers wear a few decorations when practising. But these 'practices' occur only if a large group can be mustered.

535 The Orokaiva mostly dance in pairs one behind the other, forming double file. The pairs always consist of persons of the same sex, men or women, who form more or less permanent partnerships. The dances themselves are described in some detail by Williams (1930: Ch. XIV), whose useful account would be even more valuable if he had not attempted to make up some kind of synthesis of the dance and drama of three somewhat different tribes (Orokaiva, Aiga, Binandere).

In Sivepe there were two dance leaders, one from each of the major clans, who danced as partners. They had the final say about the programme; their body

5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mountain Orokaiva

nature, partly a human nature, and these aspects are only partly differentiated. He ravages taro lying in the *gaga* in the manner of a wild pig. The wild taro *bere* planted by the woman in the beginning of the myth are fitly equated with his 'children' because Totoima's realm is the bush; bush taro are the children he might be expected to engender. The garden, however, is his wife's realm. It is she who nurses taro to maturity and who nurtures her family. She too has a dual nature, as she nurtures Totoima and also conspires to kill him. This second aspect is found in numerous myths concerning Totoima's wife. In the present version not only the wife but also the daughter is involved in conspiracy.

The taro are her children, and it is right that Totoima should eat them. She feeds them to him. However, she places restrictions on Totoima's appetite. The *bere* of the domestic taro must be preserved for planting. Hence it is the woman's duty to withhold these from her husband. Woman's two aspects – nurture and domestication – are crucial in the ritual statements made through gifts of taro.

Here we encounter again the dichotomy in sex roles to which I referred in the previous chapter. The male tends to be concerned with the killing of enemies and wild animals, the driving out of ghosts, the felling of bush before a garden can be made. On the other hand, the female is identified with the cultivation of taro. The *dema* of the taro are regularly called upon in drum songs performed at harvest time:

Bako jape teijo jape bako
Punduga kovari terijo jape bako, etc.

'Taro-being, ancestress, come to our aid, ancestress, taro-being; with the *punduga* harvesting help us, ancestress, taro-being', etc., where *punduga* is a variety of taro and the song continues with lines similar to the second one, invoking a great number of taro varieties, one after the other.

Taro, clearly, is a feminine plant. The first taro plant is found by a married woman in several myths I have recorded, though in others it was found by a brother and sister travelling together. One may well ask why it is, if taro is a feminine plant, that in this myth (and in others) we find its origin associated with two siblings of opposite sex (*du*), and why in particular it was the male sibling who was lying in the *gaga* while the female one was in the field. Those who like to impute laziness to the Orokaiva male may say that this scene is only too typical, but one cannot seriously believe this myth to indulge in caricature. In my explanation I shall anticipate an argument developed at greater length in Chapter VIII. It is a male sex role to clear a garden and give it to a woman; it is a female sex role to grow taro and give it to a man. These gifts are complementary and mediate the relationship between man and woman. The Orokaiva will classify a garden as a feminine thing 'because it is given to the woman' and a harvested taro as a masculine thing 'because it is given to the man'. This is why the taro lying in the *gaga* was a male sibling.

Evidence presented in the course of this chapter will show that Orokaiva regard taro as having a dual nature: while in the earth, they are identified with the woman who nurtures them and who regards them and nurses them as her children. When harvested they are victims to be killed, cut up and cooked and finally eaten. In this role of victims they are male, because the male is the killer

5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mountain Orokaiva

incontinently appropriated by her husband. The sharing of a fruit, especially a twin fruit, is a frequent practice when two people wish to establish or restore specially close bonds with one another. It constitutes a mutual pledge of friendship by agreeing to have a feast and take all the taro; they are re-establishing it by the betelnut-sharing. Thus we meet again the theme of the removal of conflict and the promoting of communion that dominates the feasting institution.

After the meeting, an invitation is sent to the chosen village. This takes the form of a small preliminary gift of betelnut and food, symbolic of the bounty to come later. The sending of this gift is called *sope ikari*. The men begin to build the feast house, a special structure which looks quite different from modern houses, but seems to correspond in almost every respect to the design of ordinary pre-contact Orokaiva houses. A style of carving used on the posts of modern feast houses seems to derive from the taro cult prevalent in the Northern District shortly after 1914 (see Chinnery and Haddon 1917, Williams 1928). The house is normally ready about a month before the feast. The ritual task of drawing down the spirits to dwell in the house and possess the offerers of sacrifice now begins. There is an all-night dance in which only initiated men participate, and at which bullroarers and flutes are used to draw the spirits. (For these instruments see Chinnery and Beaver 1915, Williams 1930: 195.) Though informants claimed that this ritual was now abandoned, I know it was enacted at Urarituru, two miles from Sivepe, in 1967. In some villages this dance is repeated (as Williams also notes, 1930: 230) from time to time before the feast, while it is also general practice to sit in front of the feast house at night and sing feast chants, which I heard one evening at Inonda. Each chant dealt either in forthright direct language or more symbolically with one of the objects necessary for a feast: meat, taro, various other vegetables and fruits, clothes, ornaments, betelnut, etc., telling them all to be plentiful. Another chant was addressed to the smoke arising from the fire inside the feast-house, telling it to draw to the village an abundance of guests. As these chants proceed at night, people busy themselves by bringing in food for the feast, preparing ceremonial clothing, and ornaments to be worn by the hosts.

The main effect of these preparations is to induce in the offerers of sacrifice a psychological identification with the *dema* of primeval time. Very little agricultural work is done in this part of the year except harvesting so that virtually all productive energy goes into ceremonial preparations. Those who are to play the role of visitors must likewise prepare, as they are usually called upon to dance, and so need to make or renovate the same paraphernalia and rehearse their dances. The change of identity that occurs when people wear ceremonial dress is strongly emphasised. Everybody must act as though this dress actually makes the wearer unrecognisable. Informants variously explain that the wearer is a wallaby, a flower, one of a number of species of birds perhaps, or an *embahi* – a spirit. Williams has described how initiands are expected to show fear of the *embahi* at initiation and be mystified by the disguise. Initiation, indeed, is the ritual whereby young people learn the dual identity of men: the everyday people one sees about the village, and the ancestral spirits which may at any time transform these familiar people into beings of primal time. The curious nasal sound of the feasting songs emphasises this new identity.

5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mountain Orokaiva

5. *The Message of the Sacred Flutes*

We are now in a position to analyse Williams' data on the *otohu*. Recent theoretical advances in anthropology help us to a fairly easy solution to the problem of the *otohu* by following up a clue Williams threw away as insignificant. Williams was actually very close to the solution I now propose. He recognised that the explanation of the *otohu* is to be found in the ritual of initiation. He also recognised that Chinnery's and Beaver's explanation of initiation, (viz. that it educates by showing initiands the terrifying power of the spirits), 'does not lay sufficient stress on the actual paraphernalia, viz. the bullroarers and flutes, which play a more important part in the ceremony than would appear' (1930: 195). Finally, Williams records (*ibid.*, 185) that in some localities such as Wasida, one of the duet of flutes is actually called *otohu* and the other *e* (= mother). Though this usage is only local, it nevertheless gives us a crucial insight into the significance of the word *otohu*.

Seeing that the Wasida people used the same word for the mental qualities known as *otohu* and the larger and lower-pitched of the pair of sacred flutes, it is useful to inquire whether some symbolic equivalence exists between these mental qualities and these objects. The question falls into two parts. First, we have to explain why there should be any association between a flute and a set of social virtues. Secondly, we have to explain why the flute called *otohu*, which is symbolically equivalent to a set of moral virtues, should be played in antiphony to another flute called *e*. As for the first question, Williams reports that these flutes are never seen but only heard by the uninitiated and that they are regarded as voices of the spirits or *embahi*. The initiated have seen the *embahi* and are allowed to see and play the sacred flutes. They have made the acquaintance of the world of primal ancestors who enunciated and established the moral rules of social behaviour. As children they were taught to obey these rules, but as initiates they have experienced a mystic unity with the deities who established them. The sacred flutes, being voices of the spirits, have communicated these rules in their spiritual essence. Now an *otohu embo* (a man of good character, ibid., p. 205) is a man who lives according to the message he has received from the sacred flutes. The connection between the flutes and the set of social virtues is therefore not difficult to establish.

Secondly, why should the flute called *otohu* be played in antiphony to a flute called *e*? To answer this question let us first recall that according to Williams' own evidence (*ibid.*, 185), the Orokaiva classify one of this pair of flutes – always the larger and lower-pitched one – as masculine and the other as feminine. If the latter is equated to 'mother', then what kinsman is associated with the masculine flute? It seems most plausible that the masculine flute should be symbolically equivalent to the mother's brother, as it is he who acts as initiator of the novice and is thus, on the social level, the mediator between the latter and the spirit world. He teaches the initiand to play the flutes, he gives him medicines which ensure success in adult roles, and finally he presents him with the ornament called *otohu*. The association here is clear enough, but see model 34 on p. 187.A

Throughout the Orokaiva world we find the opposition of the male and female principle: between killing and nurture, bush and garden, victim and taro

A [See Category 431--Analyst]

5: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mountain Orokaiva

The mother and mother's brother, being the most harmonious, gentle and affectionate male/female couple known to the Orokaiva, are the most suited for the task of mediating between the fearsome spirit world and the human being. The two initiatory flutes are therefore identifed with them.

How are the *otohu* ornaments connected with (*a*) the moral qualities and (*b*) the flute of the same name? The first part of this question was answered convincingly by Williams, as we have seen. But how are *otohu* ornaments symbolically equivalent to flutes? It is relevant to recall the difference between the two identity symbols *otohu* and *hae*. Ideally, the latter is transmitted in the patriline, the former in the matriline. All other differences (e.g. that the *hae* is attached to the corporate group and the *otohu* to the exchange system) follow from the mode of transmission.

The common characteristic of initiation ceremony, sacred flutes and *otohu* ornaments is that they all ideally derive from uterine kin or, in any case, that they have no necessary connection with the clan. Initiation pries the novice loose from early over-attachment to the clan and confronts him with the more adventurous, less secure world of the exchange system (*mine*). This applies equally to girls and boys. The rigours of this new arena are very effectively dramatised by the *aguma* whose recital emphasises that it is meritorious for the *otohu embo* to kill enemies. The same message is conveyed in a different way by the mother's brother whose role includes the gift of black magic (*suruka*) to his nephew. The ornament, *suruka* and other presentations come to the nephew not of right, but in the form of *mine*, in exchange for help and obedience offered to the mother's brother and gifts made by the novice's family.

The existence of two identity symbols, *hae* and *otohu*, side by side, indicates the strong emphasis placed by Orokaiva culture upon social relationships outside the corporate group. Among the neighbouring Baruga, whose culture closely resembles the Orokaiva, but who are more strongly patrilineal, we find only one identity symbol, the *kotopo*, which serves both as *hae* (lineage emblem) and as *otohu* (honorific ornament). Initiation is here carried out by the clan, introduces the novice to full clan membership, but carries no implications for participation in a wider network.

The *otohu* flute is a voice from the spirit world, mediated through the mother's brother. This voice communicates a certain moral order. The initiand hears the flutes but at that time makes no response. If he is later presented with an *otohu* ornament, he must make pledges. The ornament, as it is thrown back and forth over his head, communicates the same message as the flute but this time the novice responds to the voice. It is thus that he makes the ornament into a symbol of his identity.

6. Otohu *and* Hambo *Compared*

There are many resemblances between *otohu* and other *hambo*. They are made from largely the same materials. They are all, together with *di* (feathers) made accessible to men and women at the time of initiation, as soon as they have seen the *embahi*. Yet there are also many differences both in significance and in transactional custom. First of all, *otohu* may be worn on any important occasion, but *hambo* only during a dance or in other ceremonial contexts.

431 Other informal transactions involving specific reciprocal obligations include the exchange of labour services, gifts of animals
457 killed during a hunting expedition and more or less casual transactions with non-residents.

574 Formal exchanges operate on a larger scale than the daily or casual transactions. Crocombe (1966:71-2) has listed the main Orokaiva traditional ceremonies ('pondo' or feasts) as marking initiation, marriages, deaths, enhancement of prestige, land transfers, the re-establishment of peace after a quarrel and the
[178] lifting of prohibitions between a man and his mother-in-law. The first and last of these have become very rare. In addition to the traditional ceremonies, parties may now be held to mark Christmas, Easter, the saint's day of the local church, the opening of a school or aid post, and birthdays.

A feast provides an opportunity for settling many obligations which may be quite irrelevant to the ostensible purpose and may not
[439] concern the person or group actually 'giving' the feast. It may involve one or several villages or descent groups. The feast foods
[262] are almost exclusively village-produced, although small amounts of storebought goods, particularly rice, tinned fish, bread, tea and sugar, are becoming more common. Some feasts, such as those marking the end of minor disputes between individuals, are essentially exchanges and in themselves take little time; others include much ceremonial and may last longer than twenty-four hours.[1]

Parties seldom involve reciprocal exchanges though at some large ones traditional obligations to other participants may be settled. Invitations are usually given on the basis of residence near the
[535] location of the party rather than of membership of a particular descent group. Most take place during the afternoon and evening
[533] and non-traditional dancing to guitar accompaniment may continue throughout the night. Generally, only the host's household is
[534] involved in much preparation for a private party but other men's wives will help prepare food, for which some return is expected. Often only a small number of those attending receive a share of food in the customary manner. Others may participate in the dancing at will, but, if they wish to eat or drink, must purchase food
[77] or alcohol. Behaviour at such parties is largely imitative of European practice, to the extent that at one wedding party observed the bride was presented with a quantity of old plates, dishes and cutlery by other villagers.

438 In addition to these exchanges with kinsmen, co-residents and
[437] neighbouring villagers, there have been long-established trade links between the inland and coastal people. This trade originally

[1] In the past they sometimes lasted several days.

and two walked over the Owen Stanleys to Port Moresby in search of work. Two of the remaining three are still at school at Sasembata, leaving only Rodney Gill at home. The fact that he has not already left probably reflects some latent sense of obligation towards his parents.

After completing standard 4 at Sasembata, Rodney Gill went to stay with his married sister near Port Moresby for several months but he has never been employed outside the village. Nevertheless, he is frequently away for several weeks at a time, particularly at Sangara. Even during the survey period he was absent on 17.9 per cent of potential survey days, or 34 days in all. During 32 of these he was on an unbroken visit to Sangara assisting a settler construct a house, for which he received $6 and his keep.

Two months after returning to Sivepe he obtained work at Sasembata mission station, helping to erect new class-rooms for a salary of 80c per month. Disillusioned by the small wage he left after three months; nevertheless this work was the most important category in his total activity pattern. Since his parents have no cash crops and Rodney Gill has made no attempt to establish his own, the little cash cropping he does, 0.4 hours per week, is confined to assisting his brother Cecil King with his coffee.

Rodney Gill spends only 32 per cent of his time on productive subsistence tasks, compared with the sample mean of 65 per cent, and his contribution to subsistence gardening is particularly slight. Like other youths, he prefers to spend his time hunting and fishing, and for him other subsistence food production is the main subsistence activity. During the survey Rodney Gill rebuilt, almost single-handed, the single men's house in which he sleeps and also gave Cecil considerable assistance in rebuilding his house.

In general the productive tasks available in the village which appeal most to young men are those which occur irregularly or which can be done on impulse, have an important recreational aspect and have associated with them obvious shows of skill or strength. Their most popular leisure pursuits are parties and dancing to guitars. Rodney Gill spends more time fulfilling social obligations than any of the other individuals considered - 8.9 hours a week - yet 75 per cent of this was attending parties. Although most youths seldom have much money to spend on food and alcohol at these gatherings, the guitar music, singing and dancing pursued unrelentingly through the night appeal to them. Modelled as they are on expatriate festivities, and given an element of inter-village rivalry with

other rites which are still based largely on traditional precedents, tapa cloths, arm-bands, necklaces and head-dresses are de rigeur, but informants stated that a birthday party was different, as it was a European institution. 504 292 177

The language most frequently used was Pidgin as most of the labourers came from various parts of New Guinea, but the local people spoke between themselves in Orokaiva. Police Motu, the official lingua franca of Papua, was heard quite frequently and the notice about donations was written in that language. While the non-Orokaiva people conversed freely in lingue franche, the less prominent of the Orokaiva people kept largely to themselves. 504 191 198

The only indigenous musical instrument present was a single drum, but it was not played. When asked why there were not more drums, those present expressed mild contempt for them and explained that there would be guitars. All the music, which continued almost nonstop from dusk on Saturday until daylight Sunday, was provided by six or eight guitars owned and played by the indentured labourers present. There were no skilled guitarists, and the band merely strummed a basic rhythm which changed little during the course of the evening. The repertoire of songs was not extensive and most were repeated many times. All of them were either popular Western or modern Polynesian tunes, some sung to Pidgin words, other to English words and a few to Orokaiva words. 504 534 504 533

Most of the young men danced, some of them almost constantly, but very few knew any pattern of steps. The majority were attempting to dance modern style Polynesian dancing which had been learned indirectly from the Samoan, Cook Island and Tongan missionaries who served along the south coast of Papua (though not in the Orokaiva area). The one man who could perform a particular Samoan men's dance quite well had learned it directly from a Samoan missionary several years ago. Some individuals tried to dance traditional Orokaiva steps but were not particularly successful owing to the foreign nature of the music. Several men from New Guinea attempted ballroom dancing which they had seen performed by Europeans in New Guinea, and in films. 504 535 [177]

Of a total of approximately 130 adults present, only about 20 were woman. While the discrepancy was partly accounted for by the number of male contract labourers, most of the relatives of the hosts who attended were also men. Few of the settlers or other visitors brought their wives (unless the latter had relatives at Inonda). The cooking was done by a group of five women, while the others remained in the shadows. 504 562

The music and entertainment were almost exclusively the prerogative of the men. No woman joined the band of guitarists and singers at any time, and none attempted to dance until about 10 p.m. [533] [535]

731 retrospective look at the pre-eruption way of life."

Though most of the contemporary evidence tallies with the accounts of Belshaw and Keesing, I should refer to two documents both [789] dating from 1951 which add some subtleties. The first is a short manuscript by Fred Kleekham, agricultural officer, Popondetta, in which he says that "the Lamington eruption which obliterated the government station at Higaturu was regarded by many as payback for the hangings" (of Orokaiva responsible for the murder of missionaries). I tried unsuccessfully to find Orokaiva who still hold this belief. Mr. Kaad had not heard of it and suggested that as Kleekham was mostly working in the coastal region of the Northern District, he may have heard this interpretation of the eruption in that region. In any case, the explanation is worth noting because, once a disaster has been attributed to the anger of a supernatural agency, the causes of that anger are open to many plausible surmises.

797 Father Albert McLaren, while at Ilimo, composed two songs one
533 of which is still widely sung among the Orokaiva and even elsewhere, as it is included in a songbook distributed to primary schools in the Territory of Papua.

1

We were at Sangara
gathered together
With all our brothers
Living together

Chorus: Have mercy on them
Lord, we live in your hand

The mountain was made by Thee
It was not seen by us before;
Lord, when it appeared
We were wounded.

Chorus

O Heavenly Father,
Look on Thy servants
Who are in Paradise
In Thy Glory.

Chorus

When the mountain was shaken
They were watching
With their children
And were buried together

Chorus

In the land of Sangara
Are the bodies of our brothers
As though they were sleeping
But we shall see them again in the end

Our brothers on earth
Had many temptations
They went up to Heaven
In Thy Glory

The evening was bright
On the hills of Ilimo
But our thoughts
Are always with our brothers

Father Albert described to me his own experiences with the eruption. He lost his own brother who was with the mission, but he was saved because he had been sent to Isivita for the service on the day of the eruption. He was able to escape by running down from Isivita. When he came close to the village of Simbeki, the darkness closed in. When the light returned, the clouds were red with flame or fire. When people saw this, he said, they thought the end of the world had come and this cloud was the fire of the Last Judgment that had come to burn them. Nobody knew anything about Higaturu being a volcano; or even of the existence of any volcano. They noticed the trees that were blown up, the branches broken down, the little hills of ash covering the valleys and people thought: this is the end of the world.

Father Albert said the Orokaiva did not use to have an idea of the end of the world; it was taught by Christianity. After the disaster, the people discussed it a great deal; through the disaster, God had shown the people just what was meant by the idea of the end of the world. I asked Father Albert whether he regarded the disaster as God's punishment for sins the people had committed, but Father Albert dismissed this idea: he did not think God would punish the innocent along with the guilty. This conversation took place many years after the disaster and can therefore hardly serve to refute the notion that in 1951, the eruption was regarded as divine punishment.

Several government officials charged that the Anglican Bishop actually encouraged people to think that the eruption was a visitation of the wroth of God, as they had not followed the laws of the Church of England. They even add a variety of anecdotes, in which the Bishop threatened that if some demand of his (different in each anecdote) was not met, he would make the mountain erupt again. After meeting Bishop Hand personally, I must confess I am rather sceptical about these stories. The Bishop felt that some Orokaiva believed the eruption was a divine punishment. He stated to me that in his own sermons he

177 of the de[illegible] remained basically unchanged, Christian burial rites
[715] and cemeteries are generally used in the belief that they are
efficacious in controlling ghosts. Girls were "shown to the people"
[764] after initiation, preferably on the mission station during the Easter
dances. The kere which was a women's initiation dance, was also
[881] performed on a mission occasion (the celebration of St. Barnabas Day,
in honour of the patron saint of this station).

What was the motive of mission teachers introducing a new form
881 of initiation ritual to the Orokaiva? This extramural activity,
177 performed in the dead of night, signified a little more than the
intertribal status rivalry analysed earlier in this chapter. The
● [533] text of the songs gives no obvious clues to their significance at the
present time. Though it was made up of at least four or five languages,
due to diffusion of the cycle through the Northern District, I managed
to collect a translation of most of it during a tour of Port Moresby
when we visited knowledgeable members of various Musa River tribes.
The songs evoke a series of phases in a woman's life, stating symbolically
her role in initiation, courtship, marriage, childbearing and feasting.
They are very rich in symbolic content which is not relevant here. But
they contain no message that can be related to any modern millennial
or cargo cult. During a visit to Uiaku, in the Collingwood Bay district,
my wife found that the old women in that village knew the songs but
not the younger ones. This points to diffusion from the Musa to the
Collingwood Bay district some decades ago. All this evidence confirms
the mission teacher's own explanation given to me that he introduced
this cycle in order to keep old traditions alive, in order to give more
strength to the younger generation which had not been properly initiated.

I was impressed by the strong religious sentiment displayed by
881 the performers especially in the very first dances. They might at that
177 time be doubtful about dance movements and words but not about the
781 demeanour appropriate to the impersonation of spirits. At the very
first practise, even the young girls knew the right bearing, intonation
and rhythm. This was not truly the introduction of an alien ritual;
the purpose and the strategy could not have been more familiar.

The involvement of my wife in this initiatory ritual helped to
771 lend it the ambiguity that was evidently intended. It was not the
177 purpose of the mission teacher to set up this pagan ritual in opposition
to Christianity but rather to bring about its continuity in a Christian
997 order. I have already shown in earlier chapters that the Christian
dispensation is conceived as not only a religious but also and importantly
a socio-economic one--that Christianity, wealth and wage labour are
perceived as part of the same complex. If it can be made to accommodate
women's initiation ceremonies (after jettisoning, of course, those
aspects to which the clergy takes exception) future generations will
have the strength of the forefathers. This desire for greater
strength, in a physical and numerical as well as spiritual sense,
was often expressed to me.

24: Schwimmer E-5 (1966-1973) 1977
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

Keesing (1952:18) agrees with this summary, adding that the eruption resulted in "strong feelings of insecurity and even of guilt in their retrospective look at the pre-eruption way of life."

A great deal of evidence supports Belshaw and Keesing in their suggestion that in 1951 the Orokaiva ascribed the eruption to the anger of the Christian God and thought they had brought this anger on themselves by various transgressions. Orokaiva informants reported that this view of the eruption was widely current at Ilimo evacuation camp. It is reflected in a song about the eruption which is still sung by Sivepe youth. This song declares the omnipotence of God and man's absolute dependence on him. It also attests to a wholly Christian eschatology: the abode of the dead is Heaven, where the living will later meet their brothers who died in the eruption. The song admits the guilt of the dead ('our brothers on earth had many temptations'), but the strongest emphasis is on the suffering of the living through the loss of their 'brothers'. Unlike Job, the singer is far too polite to contend with God and criticize his actions. He does not openly and clearly identify God as the author of his sufferings, but God's responsibility is subtly implied.

The rationale of this explanation is not obvious. Quite clearly those who believe that God and not Sumbiripa was responsible for the disaster have some belief in Christianity. In response to contact with the white man they have developed an ideology supporting the work of the missions. But how do they explain the eruption? It seems very clear that in 1951 many explained it as retribution for their lack of respect for the Christian God. But Orokaiva Christians interviewed in 1966 and 1967 rejected this explanation as resting on a misunderstanding of the nature of God. Father Albert, who composed the song referred to above, was one of those questioned. He said that many of those who died in the eruption were little children. He did not think God would punish the innocent along with the guilty. On the other hand, he did ascribe a divine purpose to the eruption. Father Albert said the Orokaiva used to have no idea of the end of the world; this notion was taught by Christianity. After the disaster the people discussed it a great deal: when they saw the sky darken and people dying from the blast, they thought the end of the world had come. God had shown them what the end would be like. In other words,